

News & Views

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STATE DOCUMENTS

Boulder River School & Hospital

May 10, 1974

MASSACHUSETTS GROUP OPPOSES COMMUNITY PLACEMENT

The Fernald League for Retarded Children has gone on record as being opposed to the Massachusetts Community Residence Program (MCP) which is responsible for placing residents from state institutions into the community programs. They have insisted that community placements be deferred until several conditions are met.

The league suggests that all state schools should be greatly improved so as to provide the present residents with other rightful services. State Residential centers should be upgraded by being staffed with enough properly trained behavioral personnel to train/teach all the residents in self-help skills and awareness of social roles and restrictions. Also the Residential Centers should be provided with new cottage type living units. Furthermore, the remaining residents should be mentally, emotionally and socially capable of living in an outside community and sheltered village before placement.

Community placement should be halted, according to the League, until the MCRP has had a chance to prove itself as effective. The League wants the MCRP to be monitored by interested citizens groups so it can be properly evaluated and improved. The League suggests a public education program be implemented so the community can better evaluate the programs. They even propose a law to guarantee the right of a placed resident to return to the state institution if his/her placement does not succeed.

The Fernald League seems primarily concerned with the quality of both the State Residential Centers and community services. They claim that both are of poor quality. The League is not necessarily opposed to community placement per se, rather they are deeply concerned that community placement is being used mainly as a means to escape the problems faced by large institutions, without insuring a better way of life for the retarded. Community programs, they claim, are inadequate, yet residents are placed there anyway under the banners of "normalization" and "zero admissions". They seem to feel that a mentally retarded individual is better off in a high quality state institution, than a lower quality community program.

The Fernald League's basic position can be adequately summarized by the following quote: from their newsletter, the "Fernald Flicker":

"...the MCRP makes the retarded resident a guinea pig for an inept bureaucracy seeking the direct attention from the failure to operate State schools well, by dispersal of the problem into many, small, unmonitored facilities agreed all over the length and health of the Commonwealth."

WAGE GUIDELINES FOR RESIDENTS

By December 1, 1974, Boulder River School and Hospital must be in compliance with the 1966 amendments to the Fair Labor Standards Act applicable to working residents of state institutions. These amendments require that resident employees receive the same regulations and rights as do non-resident employees. These rights include just compensation for work performed, the right to choose to work or not to work, and child labor laws. It is up to the State of Montana to fund additional monies with which to compensate the resident employees.

While BRS&H is waiting for funding, it is complying with other portions of the act. All residents, guardians of residents, and non-resident workers will be informed of the rights of the resident workers. All time worked by the residents will then be recorded, using a similar timekeeping system as used for non-resident employees.

LAUNDRY

BRS&H will receive bids from various commercial laundries, as soon as a survey of our laundry needs is completed. Estimates on the cost of laundry service are to be based on the pounds of dirty laundry going out of the cottages during one week. Secondary consideration will be ironing and folding of laundry, daily pick-up and delivery of laundry to a central point on the grounds. Our present cost is 7 cents per pound.

POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUALS

The policies and procedures at BRS&H are currently being revised through a combined effort of management and Union representation. Meetings are held twice weekly in an attempt to complete the revision as quickly as possible.

Present policy manuals have been recalled in order to minimize the confusion between existing policy and the new or revised policy to come. Present policies will still remain the same until they are revised or replaced. New policies will then be distributed after the old policy books have been returned.

SMILE ROOM

The Physical Therapy Department has started building what they call the Smile Room. Funded largely through private donations, the new room promises to be a useful addition to P.T.

The Smile Room is primarily for the lower functional non-ambulatory residents who as of now P.T. has been unable to program effectively. The room will consist of a sand box, a swinging hammock, possibly a small trampoline and a sensory stimulation area. The sensory stimulation area will consist of sophisticated electronic gear to effectively stimulate the resident's five senses. The swinging hammock and trampoline will give the residents the feeling of movement they are otherwise unable to experience.

The overall goal of the Smile Room, therefore, is to allow the lower functional non-ambulatory residents to become aware of their senses and thus to experience their environment more vividly than before, thereby arousing within them some degree of initiative to act on their environment.

REGIONAL SPECIAL OLYMPICS

Thirty-two residents participated in the recent Southwestern Montana Regional Special Olympic Games in Deer Lodge. The competition consisted solely of track and field events in order to obtain some official times and scores. Also BRS&H gave tumbling and trampoline demonstrations.

JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL BEGINS VOLUNTEER PROGRAM AT BRS&H

Over thirty students enrolled in the Future Homemakers of America and Family Living classes at Jefferson High School have volunteered to take part in a special program with the Deaf and Blind Program at Boulder River School and Hospital. The program, originally designed for the Deaf and Blind Department may eventually be expanded to include other areas of BRS&H due to the large response received from the high school students. The program will help the students fulfill the community service requirement of their classes.

The program is designed to not only benefit the residents of BRS&H, but also to offer an education in mental retardation to the volunteer students. After the students have completed special inservice training, they may be training individuals assigned to them using special programs prepared by the Deaf and Blind Department personnel. Of course proper supervision will be given to all volunteers while conducting a program. The main functions of the volunteers is to aide the present staff, with activities such as walking the residents to and from classes, and carrying on recreational activities.

While the whole program is still in its infant stages, it is progressing satisfactorily. Several students have already expressed an interest in continuing on through the summer as volunteers. When the program matures, it is hoped that it will come under consideration as a permanent part of the high school curriculum.

EASTER EGG HUNT

Easter Sunday was celebrated at Boulder River School and Hospital with church services followed by Easter dinner and an Easter party. The party was sponsored by the Recreation Department, and lasted for several hours out in the grassy oval by Canary Dining Room.

Canary Kitchen made a few coolers of Kool-Aid, which was served while music was playing and the eggs and candy were being hidden by the Recreation Personnel. When all was ready, the signal was given and the hunt began. Within half an hour, everyone seemed to have plenty of goodies that he or she had found.

Besides the music and the Easter Egg Hunt, there were three pinatas and impromptu puppet shows. The pinatas were, of course, filled with more goodies and as they were broken, the candy spilled to the ground and everyone scrambled to collect the treats. All during these kinds of activities, the Recreation Personnel and some of the residents, put on impromptu puppet shows, mainly wishing everybody a Happy Easter.

DAY CAMP OPENS

The Summer Day Camp Program began Monday, May 6, 1974. All units will participate on a rotation system. Two units will be combined and participate together on a tour day basis, Monday through Thursday. Different students will be going to the camp each day, grouped according to habilitative need. The Recreation Department will distribute schedules.

All students will receive instruction in the same activities with the exception of Compliance Training Students. Compliance Training Students will participate in hiking and easy game activities.

Gross Motor Skill students will receive camping technique instruction on Thursday afternoons to prepare them for overnight camping trips in August. Fine Motor Skill students will receive camping technique instruction on Tuesdays.

SHOCKWORK ORANGE

(Taken from MOVE Newsletter, Winter 74)

In Hartford, Connecticut, a young inmate lies on a couch in a hospital unit of the Somers State Prison. Slides of nude children and adult women are flashed on a screen which he watches intently. Every slide of a nude child is accompanied by a painful electric shock to the inmates groin area. There are no shocks when the slides of nude women appear. The inmate is a convicted child molester. Importantly, he is also a volunteer, participating in a unique behavior modification program designed to produce feelings of anxiety whenever the inmate thinks of a child as a sex object. Dr. Dominic Morino, chief of the prison's mental hygiene unit, said the conditioning that the program instills in the volunteer occurs very subtly and has the effect of completely repressing the inmate's desire to have sexual contact with children while at the same time enhancing the man's desire for normal sexual relationships with adults.

THINK OF ME FIRST AS A PERSON

From U. S. Catholic, by Rita Drauginis

You look at me with pity,
concern or indifference,
for I am a retarded child.
But you only see the outside me.
If I could express myself,
I would tell you what I am inside.

I am very much like you.
I feel pain and hunger.
I cannot ask politely
for a glass of water, but I know
the parched dry feeling of thirst.
I itch when mosquitoes bite me
and run when I see a bee.
I feel cozy drinking cocoa in the
kitchen
when a snowstorm blusters outside.

I had a heaviness inside
when I left my mother
to board the minibus for school.
My eyes darted back and forth,
seeking escape,
but knowing there was none.
When my sister takes me to the
playground
and children call me names,
she cries and takes me home.
Then I feel warm and dizzy,
and it is hard for me to breathe.
Mother's eyes are wet; she hold me
and tells me a story, and
I forget the children's jeers.
When I dress myself and Mother
pats my head, saying, "Good job,
Jim!" I feel...big. As big as Greg,
who goes to second grade.

I am a child--
in age now, and in ability always.

I find the touch of soft toys
and snuggly dogs comforting.
I love the toys of childhood--
a kite, a balloon, a wagon to pull.
I like to let go at the top of a slide
and after dizzy seconds find myself at
the bottom.
I like sleds on soft snow,
the wetness of rain on my forehead.

Though it is comfortable to be babied,
I am less dependent
when people treat me as a big boy.
I don't want their sympathy.
I want their respect for what I can do.
I am slow, for many things
you take for granted are hard for me.
I can hardly understand
what "tomorrow" means.
It took me months to learn
to pedal the tall blue tricycle,
but I was so proud when at last
both feet pedaled in the same
direction
and the wheels went forward.
How happy I was
when I turned on the right faucet
to get a drink of water.
I didn't want to ever turn it off.
If I can learn at my own pace and still
be accepted,
I can fit into a world
where slowness is suspect.

Think of me first as a person,
who hurts and loves and feels joy.
And know I am a child to encourage
and direct.
Smile, and say hello--
even that is enough.

RESULTS OF INSTITUTIONAL RE-ORGANIZATION QUESTIONNAIRES

The results of the questionnaires sent to the employees of BRS&H and to the parents of the residents, reveal that the overwhelming majority of those who responded desire a change in the present unit system structure. Residents also indicated a desire for change. There were 212 employees responses, 247 parent responses, and 55 resident responses.

Out of 212 responses from BRS&H employees, 165 or nearly 78% indicated a need to change the present unit system of resident grouping. Furthermore, 116 of these 212 responses, or 55%, chose habilitative need as the best type of residential grouping, while 22% chose functional level as the best.

Other questions resulted in a more even spread of preference. Eighty-two, or 39% responded yes to the question should residents be segregated according to sex, while 90, or 43% responded negatively. If residents were grouped according to level of functioning and age, 36 or 17% preferred working with low-functioning, young residents, 7.5% preferred low-functioning adults, 26% preferred working with high-functioning, young residents, while 18% preferred high-functioning adults. With the exception of low-functioning adults, this presents a fairly even distribution.

If residents were grouped according to sex, 57, or 27%, preferred to work with females, while 109, or 52%, preferred to work with male residents. Clearly, the employees prefer to work with the male residents.

A strong majority of the respondents, 73%, felt there was a need for a special cottage for residents who are difficult to manage. This may indicate that those residents who are hard to manage cause quite a problem under the present unit system.

If employees had a choice of teaching various skills, basic, secondary, or advanced, 20% would prefer teaching basic skills, 29% would prefer teaching secondary skills, and 30% would prefer teaching advanced skills. This seems to be a fairly even spread and apparently employees hold no particular preference in this area.

The parents of residents and the residents also indicated a change is needed in the present unit system. Out of 247 parent responses, 230, or 93% preferred to base the organization of the unit system on habilitative need, while only 12, or 5%, preferred the present unit system.

The present unit system then, is not a popular one, and will therefore be changed. A committee composed of Dick Heard, Janice Frisch, Dick Swenson, Jerry Butcher and an attendant will design a new unit system and determine the date of implementation. This committee will be open to input from all sources within the institution and from parents.

NEW EMPLOYEES

During the period between March 14 and April 24, 1974, there were a total of 28 new employees hired, and 33 terminations.

Joy Adams
Ruben Gam
Wilma Grewell
Stephen Kanies
Stephen Lucas
Carol Shepherd
Conner Shepard
Thomas Timken
Carol Ann Finch
Bruci Ann Hall
Judith Maynard
Harriet Peet
Jerald Saari
Kenneth Zitting

Suzanne Byron
Delia Cooper
Beatrice Klashner
Ruthann Kreider
Janet LaMere
Lurene Lockyer
Donald Maynard
Albert Peet
Gloria Phillips
David Shea
Karlene Smith
Randall Smith
Thelma Williams

RESIDENT MOVEMENT REPORT

Remaining on the grounds, as of midnight, April 26, were 556 residents, a drop of nine residents, from March 29. During this period there were six new admissions, six returns from placement, twenty placements, and two discharges. Home placements accounted for the majority of the placements.

BRS&H New & Views

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